

THE
ROMAN FATHER.

A
2
TRAGEDY,

WRITTEN BY

MR. W. WHITEHEAD.

Taken from the

MANAGER'S BOOK,

Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

*Uicunque ferunt ea sacra Minores,
Vincet Amor Patriæ, Laudumque immensa Cupido! Vixit.*

L O N D O N:

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MDCCLXXVI.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ, 1786.

COVENT-GARDEN.

M E N.

Tullus Hostilius,	—	Mr. AICKIN.
Horatius,	—	Mr. FARREN.
Publius,	—	Mr. POPE.
Valerius,	—	Mr. DAVIES.

W O M E N.

Horatia,	—	Miss BRUNTON.
Valeria,	—	Mr. MORTON.

Citizens, Guards, and Attendants.

SCENE, ROME.



THE ROMAN FATHER.

ACT I.

SCENE, *A room in Horatius's house.*

A soldier crosses the Stage, Horatia following.

HORATIA.

STAY, soldier.—As you parted from my father,
Something I overheard of near concern,
But all imperfectly. Said you not Alba
Was on the brink of fate, and Rome determin'd
This day to crush her haughty rival's power,
Or perish in th' attempt?

Sold. 'Twas so resolv'd
This morning, lady ere I left the camp.
Our heroes are tir'd out with ling'ring war,
And half-unmeaning fight.

Horatia. Alas! I hop'd
The kind remorse which touch'd the kindred States,
And made their swords fall lightly on the breasts
Of foes they could not hate, might have produc'd
A milder resolution!—Then this day
Is fix'd for death or conquest?— *[He bows.*

—To me death
Whoever conquers!—I detain you, Sir;
Commend me to my brothers, say, I wish—
But wherefore should I wish; the gods will crown
Their virtues with the just success they merit.

—Yet let me ask you, Sir—

Sold. My duty, lady,
Commands me hence; ere this they have engaged;
And conquest's self would lose its charms to me,
Should I not share the danger.

As the soldier goes out, enter Valeria.

Valeria. *[looking first on the soldier and then on Horatia.]*
My dear Horatia, wherefore wilt thou court

The means to be unhappy, still enquiring
 Still to be more undone? I heard it too;
 And flew to find thee, ere the fatal news
 Had hurt thy quiet, that thou might'st have learnt it
 From a friend's tongue, and dress'd in gentler terms.

Horatia. O, I am lost, Valeria, lost to virtue,
 Ev'n while my country's fate, the fate of Rome,
 Hangs on the conqueror's sword, this breast can feel
 A softer passion, and divide its cares.

Alba to me is Rome. Would'st thou believe it,
 I would have sent by him thou saw'st departing
 Kind wishes to my brothers, but my tongue
 Denied its office, and this rebel heart
 Ev'n dreaded their success. O Curiatius,
 Why art thou there, or why an enemy!

Valeria. Forbear this self-reproach, he is thy husband,
 And who can blame thy fears? If fortune make him
 A while thy country's foe, she cannot cancel
 Vows register'd above. What though the priest
 Had not confirm'd it at the sacred altar;
 Yet were your hearts united, and that union
 Approved by each consenting parent's choice.
 Your brothers lov'd him as a friend, a brother;
 And all the ties of kindred pleaded for him;
 And still must plead, whate'er our heroes teach us
 Of patriot-strength: Our country may demand
 We should be wretched, and we must obey;
 But never can require us not to feel
 That we are miserable; nature there
 Will give the lie to virtue.

Horatia. True: yet sure

A Roman virgin should be more than woman.
 Are we not early taught to mock at pain,
 And look on danger with undaunted eyes?
 But what are dangers? what the ghastliest form
 Of death itself? — O were I only bid
 To rush into the Tiber's foaming wave
 Swoll'n with uncommon floods, or from the height
 Of yon Tarpeian rock, whose giddy steep
 Has turn'd me pale with horror at the sight,
 I'd think the task were nothing; but to bear

Those

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These strange vicissitudes of torturing pain,
To fear, to doubt, and to despair as I do!—

Valeria. And why despair? have we so idly learn'd
The noblest lessons of our infant days,
Our trust above? Does their not still remain
The wretch's last retreat, the Gods, Horatia?
'Tis from their awful wills our evils spring,
And at their altars we may find relief.
Say, shall we thither?—Look not thus dejected,
But answer me. A confidence in them,
Even in this crisis of our fate, will calm
Thy troubled soul, and fill thy breast with hope.

Hor. Talk not of hope; the wretch on yonder plain
Who hears the victor's threats, and sees his sword
Impending o'er him, feels no surer fate,
Tho' less delay'd than mine.—What should I hope?
That Alba conquer?—Canst be every thought
Which looks that way.

Valeria. Forbear, forbear, Horatia;
Nor fright me with the thought. Rome cannot fall.
Think on the glorious battles she has fought;
Has she once failed tho' oft exposed to danger?
And has not her immortal founder promis'd
That she should rise the mistress of the world?

Horatia. And if Rome conquers, then Horatia dies.

Valeria. Why wilt thou form vain images of horror,
Industrious to be wretched? Is it then
Become impossible that Rome should triumph,
And Curiatius live? he must, he shall;
Protecting Gods shall spread their shields around him,
And love shall combat in Horatia's cause.

Hor. Think'st thou so meanly of him?—No, Valeria,
His soul's too great to give me such a trial;
Or could it ever come, I think, myself,
Thou lost in love, thus abject as I am,
Should despise the slave who dar'd survive
His country's ruin. Ye immortal powers!
Love his fame too well, his spotless honour,
At least I hope I do, so with him mine
On any terms which he must blush to own.

—What means that shout?—might we not ask Val-
eria?

Did'st thou not wish me to the temple?—Come, I will attend thee thither; the kind gods Perhaps may ease this throbbing heart, and spread, At least a temporary calm within.

Valeria. Alas, Horatia, 'tis not to the temple That thou wouldst fly; the shout alone alarms thee. But do not thus anticipate thy fate; Why shouldst thou learn each chance of varying war Which takes a thousand turns, and shifts the scene From bad to good, as fortune smiles or frowns? Stay but an hour perhaps, and thou shalt know The whole at once.—I'll send—I'll fly myself To ease thy doubts, and bring thee news of joy.

Horatia. Again, and nearer too—I must attend thee.

Valeria. Hark! 'tis thy father's voice, he comes to cheer thee.

Enter Horatius and Valerius.

Hor. [Entering.] News from the camp, my child!—Save you, sweet maid! [seeing Valeria.] Your brother brings the tidings, for alas, I am no warrior now; my useless age, Far from the paths of honour loiters here In sluggish inactivity at home. Yet I remember—

Horatia. You'll forgive us, Sir, If with impatience we expect the tidings.

Hor. I had forgot; the thoughts of what I was Engross'd my whole attention.—Pray, young soldier, Relate it for me; you beheld the scene, And can report it justly.

Val. Gentle lady, The scene was piteous, though its end be peace.

Hor. Peace? O my fluttering heart! by what kind means.

Val. 'Twere tedious, lady, and unnecessary To paint the disposition of the field; Suffice it we were arm'd, and front to front The adverse legions heard the trumpet's sound: But vain was the alarm, for motionless, And wrapt in thought they stood; the kindred ranks Had caught each other's eyes, nor dar'd to lift

The

The fault'ring spear against the breast they lov'd.
 Again th' alarm was given, and now they seem'd
 Preparing to engage, when once again
 They hung their drooping heads, and inward mourn'd.
 Then nearet drew, and at the third alarm,
 Casting their swords and useless shields aside,
 Rush'd to each others arms.

Hor. 'Twas so, just so,
 (Tho' I was then a child, yet I have heard
 My Mother weeping oft relate the story)
 Soft pity touch'd the breasts of mighty chiefs
 Romans and Sabines, when the matrons rush'd
 Between their meeting armies, and oppos'd
 Their helpless infants, and their heaving breasts
 To their advancing swords, and bade them there
 Sheath all their vengeance.—But I interrupt you—
 Proceed, Valerius, they would hear th' event.
 —And yet methinks the Albans—Pray go on.

Val. Our King Hostilius from a rising mound
 Beheld the tender interview, and join'd
 His friendly tears with theirs; then swift advanc'd
 Ev'n to the thickest press, and cried, my friends;
 If thus we love, why are we enemies?
 Shall stern ambition, rivalry of power,
 Subdue the soft humanity within us?
 Are we not join'd by every tie of kindred,
 And can we find no method to compose
 These jars of honour, these nice principles
 Of virtue, which infest the noblest mind?

Hor. There spoke his country's father! this transcends
 The flight of earth-born kings, whose low ambition
 But tends to lay the face of nature waste,
 And blast creation! how was it received?

Val. As he himself could wish, with eager transport.
 In short, the Roman and the Alban chiefs
 In council have determin'd, that since glory
 Must have her victims, and each rival state
 Aspiring to dominion scorns to yield,
 From either army shall be chose three champions
 To fight the cause alone, and whate'r state
 Shall prove superior, there acknowledg'd power

Shall

Shall fix th' imperial seat, and both unite gain'd conquest
Beneath one common head.

Horatia. Kind heaven, I thank thee! —
Blest be the friendly grief that touch'd their souls! —
Blest be Hostilius for the generous counsel! —
Blest be the meeting chiefs! and blest the tongue,
Which brings the gentle tidings!

Valeria. Now, *Horatia*,
Your idle fears are o'er.

Horatia. Yet one remains.
Who are the champions, are they yet elected?
Has Rome —

Val. — The Roman chiefs now meet in council,
And ask the presence of the sage *Horatius*.

Hor. [After having seem'd some time in thought.]
But still methinks, I like not this, to trust
The Roman cause to such a slender hazard —
Three combatants: — 'tis dangerous —

Horatia. [In a fright.] My father!

Hor. I might perhaps prevent it —

Horatia. Do not, Sir,
Oppose the kind decree.

Val. Rest satisfied,
Sweet lady, 'tis so solemnly agreed to,
Not even *Horatius's* advice can shake it.

Hor. And yet 'twere well to end these civil broils —
The neighb'ring states might take advantage of them —
— Would I were young again! how glorious
Were death in such a cause! — and yet who knows,
Some of my boys may be selected for it —

Perhaps may conquer — grant me that, kind gods,
And close my eyes in transport! — Come, *Valerius*,
I'll but dispatch some necessary orders,
And strait attend thee. — Daughter, if thou lov'st
Thy brothers, let thy prayers be pour'd to heaven,
That one at least may share the glorious task! — [Exit.]

Val. Rome cannot trust her cause to worthless hands.
They bade me greet you, lady

Well, *Valeria*,
This is your home, I find; your lovely friend,
And you, I doubt not, have indulg'd strange fears

And

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And run o'er all the horrid scenes, of war.

Valeria. Tho' we are women, brother, we are Romans,

Not to be scar'd with shadows, tho' not proof
'Gainst all alarms, when real danger threatens.

Horatia. [with some hesitation.] My brothers, gentle
Sir, you said were well;

Saw you their noble friends the Curiatii?

The truce perhaps permitted it.

Val. Yes, lady,

I left them jocund in your brother's tent,
Like friends whom envious storms awhile had parted,
Joying to meet again.

Horatia. Sent they no message?

Val. None, fair one, but such general salutation,
As friends would bring unbid.

Horatia. Said Caius nothing?

Val. Caius?

Horatia. Ay, Caius,—did he mention me?

Val. 'Twas slightly if he did, and 'scapes me now—
O yes; I do remember, when your brother
Ask'd him in jest, if he had ought to send,
A sigh's soft waftage, or the tender token
Of tresses braided to fantastic forms
To sooth a love-sick maid, (your pardon, lady,)
He smil'd, and cry'd, glory's the soldier's mistress.

Horatia. Sir, you'll excuse me—something of importance—

My father may have business—O Valeria,

[*Aside to Valeria.*

Talk to thy brother, know the fatal truth.

I dread to hear, and let me learn to die,

If Curiatius has indeed forgot me.

[*Exit.*

Val. She seems disorder'd!

Valeria. Has she not cause?

Can you administer the baneful potion,
And wonder at th' effect?

Val. You talk in riddles!

Valeria. They're riddles, brother, which your heart
unfolds,

Tho' you affect surprize. Was Curiatius

Indeed.

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You had no time for tedious stratagem ;
A dang'rous rival prest, and has succeeded.

Val. I own my error—yet once more assist me—
Nay, turn not from me, by my soul I meant not
To interrupt their loves.—Yet should some accident,
'Tis not impossible, divide their hearts,
I might perhaps have hope: therefore 'till marriage
Cuts off all commerce, and confirms me wretched,
Be it thy task, my sister, with fond stories,
Such as our ties of blood may countenance,
To paint thy brother's worth, his power in arms,
His favour with the king, but most of all
That certain tenderness of soul which steals
All womens hearts, then mention many a fair,
No matter whom, that sighs to call you sister.

Valeria. Well, well, away—Yet tell me, ere you go,
How did this lover talk of his Horatia ?

Val. Why will you mention that ungrateful subject ?
Think what you have heard me breathe a thousand times
When my whole soul dissolv'd in tenderness ;
'Twas rapture all ; what lovers only feel,
Or can express when felt. He had been here,
But sudden orders from the camp detained him.
Farewel, Horatius waits me—but remember,
My life, nay more than life, depends on you. [Exit.

Valeria. Poor youth ! he knows not how I pity his dis-
Yet dare not seem to pity what I feel. [tress,
How shall I act betwixt this friend and brother ?
Should she suspect his passion, she may doubt
My friendship too ; and yet to tell it her
Were to betray his cause. No, let my heart
With the same blameless caution still proceed ;
To each inclining most as most distressed ;
Be just to both, and leave to heav'n the rest ! [Exit.

A C T II.

Scene continues.

Enter Horatio and Valeria.

HORATIA.

A LAS, how easily do we admit
The thing we wish were true ! yet sure, Valeria,
This

This seeming negligence of Curiatius
 Betrays a secret coldness at the heart.
 May not long absence, or the charms of war,
 Have damp'd, at least, if not effac'd his passion?
 I know not what to think.

Valeria. Think my Horatia,
 That you're a lover, and have learnt the art
 To raise vain scruples, and torment yourself
 With every distant hint of fancied ill.
 Your Curiatius still remains the same.
 My brother idly trifled with your passion,
 Or might perhaps unheedingly relate
 What you too nearly feel. But see, your father.

Horatia. He seems transported; sure some happy news
 Has brought him back thus early: O my heart!
 I long, yet dread to ask him; speak, Valeria.

Enter Horatius.

Valeria. You're soon return'd, my lord.

Hor. Return'd Valeria!

My life, my youth's return'd, I tread in air.

—I cannot speak; my joy's too great for utterance.

—O could I weep!—my sons, my sons are chosen
 Their country's combatants, not one, but all.

Horatia. My brothers, said you, Sir,

Hor. All three, my child,

All three are champions in the cause of Rome.

O happy state of fathers! thus to feel

New warmth revive, and springing life renew'd
 Even on the margin of the grave!

Valeria. The time
 Of combat, is it fix'd?

Hor. This day, this hour
 Perhaps decides our doom.

Valeria. And is it known
 With whom they must engage?

Hor. Not yet, Valeria;
 But with impatience we expect each moment
 The resolutions of the Alban senate.
 And soon may they arrive, that ere we quit
 Yon hostile field, the chiefs who dar'd oppose

Rome's

Cham. Is she your daughter ! then my heart told true,
And I am at least her brother by adoption :
For you have made yourself to me a father,
And, by that patent, I have leave to love her.

Ser. Monimia, thou hast told me men are false,
Will flatter, feign, and make an art of love :
Is Chamont so ? no, sure, he's more than man,
Something that's near divine, and truth dwells in him.

Acast. Thus happy, who wou'd envy pompous pow'r,
The luxury of courts, or wealth of cities ?
Let there be joy thro' all the house this day !
In ev'ry room let plenty flow at large !
It is the birth-day of my royal Master !
You have not visited the Court, Chamont,
Since your return ?

Cha. I have no bus'ness there ;
I have not slavish temperance enough
T' attend a favourite's heels, and watch his smiles,
Bear an ill office done me to my face,
And thank the lord that wrong'd me for his favour.

Acast. This you could do. [To his sons.

Cast. I'd serve my Prince.

Acast. Who'd serve him ?

Cast. I would, my lord.

Pol. And I : both would.

Acast. Away !

He needs not any servant such as you :
Serve him ! he merits more than man can do !
He is so good, praise cannot speak his worth :
So merciful, sure he ne'er slept in wrath !
So just, that were he but a private man,
He cou'd not do a wrong ! How wou'd you serve him ?

Cast. I'd serve him with my fortune here at home,
And serve him with my person in his wars :
Watch for him, fight for him, bleed for him.

Pol. Die for him,

As ev'ry true-born loyal subject ought,

Acast. Let me embrace ye both ! now by the souls
Of my brave ancestors, I'm truly happy !
For this be ever blest my marriage day !
Blest be your mother's memory that bore you !

C

And

14 THE ORPHAN.

And doubly blest be that auspicious hour
That gave ye birth!

Enter Servant.

Serv. My lord, th' expected guests are just arrived.

Acast. Go you, and give 'em welcome and reception.
[*Ex.*

Cha. My lord, I stand in need of your assistance,
In something that concerns my peace and honour.

Acast. Spoke like the son of that brave man I lov'd :
So freely, friendly we convers'd together.
What'er it be, with confidence impart it,
Thou shalt command my fortune and my sword.

Cham. I dare not doubt your friendship nor your justice,
Your bounty shewn to what I hold most dear,
My Orphan Sister must no be forgotten!

Acast. Prithee no more of that, it grates my nature.

Cham. When our dear parents dy'd, they dy'd together,
One fate surpris'd 'em, and one grave receiv'd 'em ;
My father with his dying breath bequeath'd
Her to my love : my mother, as she lay
Languishing by him, call'd me to her side,
Took me in her fainting arms, wept and embrac'd me ;
Then press'd me close, and as she observ'd my tears,
Kiss'd them away : said she, Chamont, my son,
By this, and all the love I ever shew'd thee,
Be careful of Monimia ; watch her youth ;
Let not her wants betray her to dishonour :
Perhaps kind Heav'n may raise some friend. Then sigh'd,
Kiss'd me again ; so bless'd us, and expir'd.
Pardon my grief.

Acast. It speaks an honest nature.

Cham. The friend Heav'n rais'd was you, you took
her up

An infant, to the desert World expos'd,
And prov'd another parent.

Acast. I've not wrong'd her.

Cham. Far be it from my fears.

Acast. Then why this argument?

Cham. My lord, my nature's jealous, and you'll

Acast. Go on. [bear it.

Cham. Great spirits bear misfortunes hardly :
Good offices claim gratitude ; and pride,

Where

How blames the dull delay of Alban councils,
 And chides the ling'ring minutes as they pass,
 'Till fate determines, and the tedious chiefs
 Permit his absence; thou would'st pity him.
 But soon my sister, soon shall every bar
 Which thwarts thy happiness be far away.
 We are no longer enemies to Alba,
 This day unites us, and to-morrow's sun
 May hear thy vows, and make thy friend my brother.

Hor. [Having talked apart with Valeria.]

'Tis truly Roman.—Here's a maid Horatia,
 Laments her brother lost the glorious proof
 Of dying for his country.—Come, my son,
 Her softness will infect thee, prythee leave her.

Horatia. [Looking first on her father, and then tenderly on her brother.]

Not 'till my soul has pour'd its wishes for him.
 Hear me, dread god of war, protect and save him.

[Kneeling.]

For thee, and thy immortal Rome, he fights,
 Dash the proud spear from every hostile hand
 That dares oppose him; may each Alban chief
 Fly from his presence, or his vengeance feel!
 And when in triumph he returns to Rome, *[Rising.]*
 Hail him, ye maids, with grateful songs of praise,
 And scatter all the blooming spring before him.
 Curs'd be the envious brow that smiles not then,
 Curs'd be the wretch that wears one mark of sorrow,
 Or flies not thus with open arms to greet him.

Enter Tullus Hostil us, Valerius, and Guards.

Val. The king, my lord, approaches.

Hor. Gracious Sir, whence comes this condescension?

Tul. Good old man;

Could I have found a nobler messenger,
 I would have spar'd myself th' ungrateful task
 Of this day's embassy, for which I fear
 My news will want a welcome.

Hor. Mighty king!

Forgive an old man's warmth—They have not sure
 Made choice of other combatants.—My sons,
 Must they not fight for Rome?

Tul. Too sure they must.

Hor. Then I am blest!

Tul. But that they must engage
Will hurt thee most, when thou shalt know with whom.

Hor. I care not whom.

Tul. Suppose your nearest friends
The Curiatii were the Alban choice,
Could you bear that? Could you, young man, support
A conflict there?

Pub. I could perform my duty,
Great Sir, tho' even a brother should oppose me.

Tul. Thou art a Roman! Let thy king embrace thee.

Hor. And let thy father catch thee from his arms.

Tul. [To Publius] Know then that trial must be thine.
The Albans

With envy saw one family produce
Three chiefs, to whom their country dar'd entrust
The Roman cause, and scorn'd to be outdone.

Horatia. Then I am lost indeed; was it for this,
I pour'd my prayers to heaven? [Swoons.]

Pub. My sister!

Val. My Horatia!

Hor. O foolish girl, to shame thy father thus!
Here, bear her in—I am concern'd, my sovereign,
That even the meanest part of me should blast
With impious grief a cause of so much glory.
But let the virtue of my boy excuse it.

Tul. It does not amply. She has cause for sorrow.
The shock was sudden, and might well alarm
A firmer bosom. The weak sex demand
Our pity, not our anger;
We leave her to her tears. For you, young soldier,
You must prepare for combat. Some few hours
Are all that are allow'd you. But I charge you
Try well your heart, and strengthen every thought
Of patriot in you. Think how dreadful 'tis
To plant a dagger in the breast you love;
To spurn the ties of nature, and forget
In one short hour whole years of virtuous friendship.
Think well on that.

Pub. I do my gracious sovereign;

And

And think the more I dare subdue affection,
The more my glory.

Tul. True; but yet consider,
Is it an easy task to change affections?
In the dread onset can your meeting eyes
Forget their usual intercourse, and wear
At once the frown of war, and stern defiance?
Will not each look recall the fond remembrance
Of childhood past, when the whole open soul
Breath'd cordial love, and plighted many a vow
Of tend'rest import? Think on that, young soldier,
And tell me if thy breast be still unmov'd? oat,

Pub. Think, not, O king, howe'er resolv'd on com-
I fit so loosely to the bonds of nature,
As not to feel their force. I feel it strongly.
I love the Curiatii, and would serve them
At life's expence: But here a nobler cause
Demands my sword: For all connection else,
All private duties, are subordinate
To what we owe the public. Partial ties
Of son, and father, husband, friend, or brother,
Owe their enjoyments to the public safety,
And without that were vain — Nor need we, Sir,
Cast off humanity, and to be heroes
Cease to be men. As in our earliest days,
While yet we learn'd the exercise of war,
We strove together, not as enemies,
Yet conscious each of his peculiar worth,
And scorning each to yield; so will we now
Engage with ardent, not with hostile minds,
Not fir'd with rage, but emulous of fame. there

Tul. Now I dare trust thee: go and teach thy bro-
To think like thee, and conquest is your own.
This is true courage, not the brutal force
Of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve
Of virtue, and of reason. — He who thinks
Without their aid to shine in deeds of arms,
Builds on a sandy basis his renown.
A dream, a vapour, or an ague fit
May make a coward of him — Come, Horatius,
Thy other sons shall meet thee at the camp,

For now I do bethink me 'tis not fit
They should behold their sister thus alarm'd.
Haste, soldier, and detain them. [*To one of the guards.*]

Hor. Gracious Sir,
We'll follow on the instant.

Tul. Then farewell.

When next we meet, 'tis Rome and liberty !

[*Exit with guards.*]

Hor. Come, let me arm thee for the glorious toil.
I have a sword whose light'ning oft has blaz'd
Dreadfully fatal to my country's foes ;
Whose temper'd edge has cleft their haughty crests,
And stain'd with life-blood many a reeking plain.
'This shalt thou bear ; myself will gird it on,
And lead thee forth to death or victory. [*Going.*]
—And yet my Publius, shall I own a weakness ?
'Tho' I detest the cause from whence they spring,
I feel thy sister's sorrows like a father.
She was my soul's delight.

Pub. And may remain so.
'This sudden shock has but alarm'd her virtue,
Not quite subdu'd its force. At least, my father,
'Time's lenient hand will teach her to endure
'The ills of chance, and reason conquer love.

Hor. Should we not see her ?

Pub. By no means, my lord ;
You heard the king's commands about my brothers,
And we have hearts as tender sure as they.
Might I advise, you should confine her closely,
Lest she infect the matrons with her grief,
And bring a stain we should not wish to fix
On the Horatian name.

Hor. It shall be so.

We'll think no more of her. 'Tis glory calls,
And humbler passions beat alarms in vain. [*Exit.*]

[*As Horatius goes off, Horatia enters at another door.*]

Horatia. Where is my brother ?—O my dearest Pub-
lius.
If e'er you lov'd Horatio, ever felt
That tenderness which you have seem'd to feel,
O hear her now !

Pub. What would'st thou, my Horatia ?

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Horatia. I know not what I would—I'm on the rack,
Despair and madness tear my lab'ring soul.

—And yet, my brother, sure you might relieve me.

Pub. How, by what means? By heaven, I'll die
to do it.

Horatia. You might decline the combat.

Pub. Ha!

Horatia. I do not
Expect it from thee. Prithge look more kindly.
—And yet is the request so very hard?

I only ask thee not to plunge thy sword
Into the breast thou lov'st, not kill thy friend;
Is that so hard?—I might have said thy brother.

Pub. What canst thou mean? Beware, beware *Horatia*;

Thou know'st I dearly love thee, nay thou know'st
I love the man with whom I must engage.
Yet hast thou faintly read thy brother's soul,
If thou can'st think entreaties have the power,
Tho' urg'd with all the tenderness of tears,
To shake this settled purpose: They may make
My task more hard, and my soul bleed within me,
But cannot touch my virtue.

Horatia. 'Tis not virtue
Which contradicts our nature, 'tis the rage
Of over-weening pride. Has Rome no champions
She could oppose but you? Are there no thousands
As warm for glory, and as tried in arms,
Who might without a crime aspire to conquest,
Or die with honest fame?

Pub. Away, away;
Talk to thy lover thus. But 'tis not Caius
Thou would'st have infamous.

Horatia. O kill me not
With such unkind reproaches. Yes, I own
I love him, more—

Pub. Than a chaste Roman maid
Should dare confess.

Horatia. Should dare?—What means my brother?
I had my father's sanction on my love,
And duty taught me first to seek its power.

—Should

—Should dare confess!—is that the dreadful crime?
 Alas but spare him, spare thy friend, Horatius,
 And I will cast him from my breast for ever.
 Will that oblige thee?—

Pub. Why wilt thou talk thus madly? Love him still:
 And if we fall the victims of our country
 (Which heav'n avert!) wed, and enjoy him freely.

Horatia. O never, never. What, my country's bane!
 The murderer of my brothers! may the gods
 First pour out each unheard-of vengeance on me!

Pub. Do not torment thyself thus idly—Go,
 Compose thyself, and be again my sister.

Re-enter Horatius (with the sword.) here?

Hor. This sword in Veii's field—What dost thou
 Leave him I charge thee, girl—Come, come, my Pub—
 Let's haste where duty calls.

Horatia. What, to the field?
 He must not, shall not go: here will I hang—
 Or if you have not quite cast off affection,
 If you detest not your distracted sister—

Hor. Shame of thy race, why dost thou hang upon
 Would'st thou entail eternal infamy
 On him, on me, on all?

Horatia. Indeed I would not,
 I know I ask impossibilities;
 Yet pity me, my father!

Pub. Pity thee?
 Be gone, fond wretch, nor urge my temper thus;
 By heaven I love thee as a brother ought.
 Then hear my last resolve; if fate, averse
 To Rome, and us, determine my destruction,
 I charge thee wed thy lover; he will then
 Deserve thee nobly. Or if kinder Gods
 Propitious hear the prayers of suppliant Rome,
 And he should fall by me, I then expect
 No weak upbraidings for a lover's death,
 But such returns as shall become thy birth,
 A sister's thanks for having sav'd her country. [*Exit.*]

Horatia. Yet stay—Yet hear me, Publius—But one
 word.

Hor. Stay, stay, rash girl, thou'lt tempt thy father

To

To do an outrage might perhaps distract him.

Horatia. Alas, forgive me, Sir—I'm very wretched,
Indeed I am—Yet I will strive to stop
This swelling grief, and bear it like your daughter,
Do but forgive me, Sir.

Hor. I do, I do—

Go in, my child, the gods may find a way
To make thee happy yet. But on thy duty,
Whate'er reports may reach, or fears alarm thee,
I charge thee come not to the field.

Horatia. I will not,
If you command it, Sir. But will you then, |
As far as cruel honour may permit,
Remember that your poor Horatia's life
Hangs on this dreadful contest? [*Exit Horatia.*]

Hor. [*Lacking after her.*]
Spite of my boasted strength, her griefs unman me,
—But let her from my thoughts. The patriot's breast
No hopes, no fears, but for his country knows,
And in her danger loses private woes. [*Exit*

A C T III.

Scenes continues.

Valerius and Valeria meeting.

VALERIUS.

NOW, my Valeria, where's the charming she
That calls me to her? with a lover's haste
I fly to execute the dear command.

Valeria. 'Tis not the lover, but the friend she wants,
If thou dar'st own that name.

Val. The friend, my sister!
There's more than friendship in a lover's breast,
More warm, more tender is the flame he feels—

Valeria. Alas, these raptures suit not her distress:
She seeks th' indulgent friend, whose sober sense,
Free from these mists of passion, might direct
Her jarring thoughts, and plead her doubtful cause.

Val. Am I that friend! O did she turn her thought
On me for that kind office?

Valeria.

Valeria. Yes, Valerius.
 She chose you out to be her advocate
 To Curiatus; 'tis the only hope
 She now dares cherish; her relentless brother
 With scorn rejects her tears, her father flies her,
 And only you remain to sooth her cares,
 And save her ere she sinks.

Val. Her advocate
 To Curiatus!

Valeria. 'Tis to him she sends you,
 To urge her suit, and win him from the field.
 But come; her sorrows will more strongly plead
 Than all my grief can utter.

Val. To my rival!
 To Curiatus plead her cause, and teach
 My tongue a lesson which my heart abhors!
 Impossible, Valeria! prithee say
 Thou saw'st me not; the business of the camp
 Confin'd me there; farewell. [Going.

Valeria. What means my brother?
 You cannot leave her now; for shame turn back;
 Is this the virtue of a Roman youth?
 O by these tears!

Val. They flow in vain, Valeria:
 Nay, and thou know'st they do. O earth and heaven!
 This combat was the means my happier stars
 Found out to save me from the brink of ruin;
 And can I plead against it; turn assassin
 On my own life?

Valeria. Yet thou canst murder her
 Thou dost pretend to love; away, deceiver;
 I'll seek some worthier messenger to plead
 In beauty's cause; but first inform Horatia,
 How much Valerius is the friend she thought him.

Val. O heavens! stay, sister; 'tis an arduous task. [Going.

Valeria. I know the task is hard, and thought I knew
 Thy virtue too.

Val. I must, I must, I will obey thee.
 Lead on.—Yet prithee, for a moment leave me,
 'Till I can recollect my scatter'd thoughts,

And

Only to sweet Monimia I've bequeath'd
Ten thousand crowns : a little portion for her,
To wed her honourably, as she's born.
Be not less friends because you're brothers.

Enter Serina.

Ser. My father!

Acast. My heart's darling!

Ser. Let my knees

Fix to the earth. Ne'er let my eyes have rest,
But wake and weep, till Heav'n restore my father.

Acast. Rise to my arms, and thy kind pray'rs are
answer'd.

For thou'rt a wond'rous extract of all goodness.
Born for my joy, and no pain's felt when near thee.
Chamont!

Enter Chamont.

Cham. My lord, may't prove not an unlucky omen!
Many I see are wasting round about you,
And I am come to ask a blessing too.

Acast. May'tt thou be happy!

Cham. Where?

Acast. In all thy wishes.

Cham. Confirm me so, and make this Fair-one mine :
I am unpractis'd in the trade of courtship,
And know not how to deal love out with art :
Onsets in love seem best like those in war,
Fierce, resolute, and done with all the force ;
So I would open my whole heart at once,
And pour out the abundance of my soul.

Acast. What says Serina? Canst thou love a soldier?
One born to honour, and to honour bred?
One that has learnt to treat e'en foes with kindness ;
To wrong no good man's fame, nor praise himself?

Ser. Oh! name not Love, for that's ally'd to Joy,
And Joy must be a stranger to my heart,
When you're in danger. May Chamont's good-fortune
Render him lovely to some happier maid!
Whilst I at friendly distance see him blest,
Praise the kind Gods, and wonder at his virtues.

Acast. Chamont, pursue her, conquer, and possess her,
And, as my son, a third of all my fortune
Shall be thy lot.

But keep thy eyes from wand'ring, man of frailty.

Beware

Beware the dangerous beauty of the wanton,
 Shun their enticements : Ruin, like a vulture,
 Waits on their conquests : falshood too's their business,
 They put false beauty off to all the world,
 Use false endearments to the fools that love 'em,
 And when they marry, to their silly husbands
 They bring false virtue, broken fame and fortune.

Mon. Hear ye that, my lord ?

Pol. Yes, my fair monitor, old men always talk thus.

Acast. Chamont, you told me of some doubts that
 press'd you :

Are you yet satisfy'd that I'm your friend ?

Cham. My lord, I would not lose that satisfaction
 For any blessing I could wish for :

As to my fears, already I have lost 'em :

They ne'er shall vex me more, nor trouble you.

Acast. I thank you. Daughter, you must do so too.
 My friends, 'tis late :

Now my disorder seems all past and over,
 And I, methinks, begin to feel new health.

Cast. Would you but rest, it might restore you quite.

Acast. Yes, I'll to bed ; old men must humour weak-
 ness .

Let me have music then, to lull and chase
 This melancholy thought of death away.

Good-night, my friends ! Heav'n guard ye all ! Good-
 night !

To-morrow early we'll salute the day,
 Find out new pleasures, and redeem lost time.

[*Exeunt all but Chamont and Chaplain.*]

Cham. Hift, hift, Sir Gravity, a word with you.

Chap. With me, Sir !

Cham. If you're at leisure, Sir, we'll waste an hour :
 'Tis yet too soon to sleep, and 'twill be charity
 To lend your conversation to a stranger.

Chap. Sir, you're a soldier ?

Cham. Yes.

Chap. I love a soldier :

And had been one myself, but that my parents
 Would make me what you see me : yet I'm honest,
 For all I wear black.

Cham. And that's a wonder.

Have

Val. To whom?

Horatia. To Curiatius bear this scarf;
And tell him, if he ever truly lov'd;
If all the vows he breath'd were not false lures
To catch th' unwary mind,—and sure they were not!
O tell him now he may with honour cease
To urge his cruel right; the senators
Of Rome and Alba will approve such mildness.
Tell him his wife, if he will own that name,
Intreats him from the field; his lost Horatia
Begs on her trembling knees he would not tempt
A certain fate, and murder her he loves.
Tell him if he consents, she fondly swears,
By every God the varying world adores,
To know no brothers and no sire but him;
With him, if honour's harsh commands require it,
She'll wander forth, and seek some distant home,
Nor ever think of Rome or Alba more.

Valeria. Well, well, he will; do not torment thyself.

Horatia. [Catching hold of the scarf, which she looked upon attentively while Valeria spoke.]

'Look here, Valeria, where my needle's art
Has drawn a Sabine Virgin, drown'd in tears
For her lost country, and forsaken friends;
While by her side the youthful ravisher
Looks ardent love, and charms her griefs away.
I am that maid distress'd, divided so
'Twixt love and duty.——But why rave I thus!
Haste, haste, to Curiatius; and yet stay,
Sure I have something more to say to him;
I know not what it was.

Val. Could I, sweet lady,

But paint your grief with half the force I feel it,
I need but tell it him, and he must yield.

Horatia. It may be so. Stay, stay, be sure you tell him,

If he rejects my suit, no power on earth
Shall force me to his arms; I will devise——
I'll die and be reveng'd!

Valeria. Away, my brother;

But oh for pity, do your office justly; [Aside to Valerius.]

D

Let

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Let not your passion blind your reason now,
But urge her cause with ardour.

Val. By my soul

I will, Valeria; her distress alarms me;
And I have now no interest but hers.

[*Exit.*

Horatia. He's gone.—I had a thousand things;
And yet I'm glad he's gone. Think you, Valeria,
Your brother will delay; they may engage
Before he reaches them.

Valeria. The field's so near,
That a few minutes bring him to the place:
And 'tis not probable the senators
So soon should yield a cause of so much justice.

Horatia. And yet should I succeed, the hard-gain'd
strife

May chance to rob me of my future peace.
He may not always with the eyes of love
Look on that fondness which has stab'd his fame.
He may regret too late the sacrifice
He made to love, and a fond woman's weakness,
And think the milder joys of social life
But ill repay him for the mighty loss
Of patriot-reputation!

Valeria. Pray forbear,
And search not thus into eventful time
For ills to come.

He will admire thy love, which could persuade him
To give up glory for the milder triumph
Of heart-felt ease and soft humanity.

Horatia. I fain would hope so. Yet we hear not of
him.

our brother, much I fear, has su'd in vain.
ould we not send to urge his slow express?
This dread uncertainty! I long to know
My life or death at once.

Valeria. Shall I to the walls?

I may from thence with ease survey the field,
And can dispatch a messenger each moment
To tell thee all goes well.

Horatia. My best Valeria!

When, I know thy heart is there already.

Thou

Thou art a Roman maid, and tho' thy friendship
 Detains thee here with one who scarce deserves
 That sacred name, art anxious for thy country.
 But yet for charity think kindly of me;
 For thou shalt find by the event, Valeria,
 I am a Roman too, however wretched. [*Exit Valeria.*
 Am I a Roman then? Ye powers, I dare not
 Resolve the fatal question I propose.
 If dying would suffice, I were a Roman;
 But to stand up against this storm of passions
 Transcends a woman's weakness. Hark, what noise!—
 'Tis news from Curiatius; Love, I thank thee!

Enter a Servant.

Well, does he yield? distract me not with silence:
 Say in one word.—

Serv. Your father—

Hor. What of him?

Would he not let him yield? O cruel father!

Serv. Madam, he's here—

Hor. Who!

Serv. Borne by his attendants.

Horatia. What mean'st thou?

Horatius is led in by his servants.

Hor. Lead me yet a little onward;

I shall recover straight.

Horatia. My gracious Sire!

Hor. Lend me thy arm, Horatia.—So—my child,
 Be not surpriz'd; an old man must expect
 These little shocks of nature, they are hints
 To warn us of our end.

Horatia. How are you, Sir?

Hor. Better, much better. My frail body could not
 Support the swelling tumult of my soul.

Horatia. No accident I hop'd alarm'd you, Sir!
 My brothers—

Hor. Here, go to the field again;
 You, Cautus and Vindicius; and observe
 Each circumstance; I shall be glad to hear
 The manner of the fight.

Horatia. Are they engag'd?

Hor. [During this speech a servant gives a paper to Horatia.]

They are, Horatia ; but first let me thank thee
For staying from the field ; I would have seen
The fight myself, but this unlucky illness
Has forc'd me to retire. Where is thy friend ?
What paper's that ? Why dost thou tremble so ?
Here let me open it.—From Curiatius !

Horatia. O keep me not in this suspense, my father ;
Relieve me from the rack.

Hor. He tells thee here,
He dare not do an action that would make him
Unworthy of thy love, and therefore—

Horatia. Dies !

Well, I am satisfied.

Hor. I see by this
Thou hast endeavour'd to persuade thy lover
To quit the combat. Could'st thou think, Horatia,
He'd sacrifice his country to a woman ?

Horatia. I know not what I thought ; he proves too
plainly

Whate'er it was, I was deceiv'd in him
Whom I applied to.

Hor. Do not think so, daughter ;
Could he with honour have declin'd the fight,
I should myself have join'd in thy request,
And forc'd him from the field. But think, my child,
Had he consented, and had Alba's cause,
Supported by another arm, been baffled,
What then could'st thou expect ? Would he not curse
His foolish love, and hate thee for thy fondness ?
Nay think, perhaps, 'twas artifice in thee
To aggrandize thy race, and lift their fame
Triumphant o'er his ruin and his country's.
Think well on that, and reason must convince thee.

Horatia. [Wildly.] Alas, had reason ever yet the
power

To talk down grief, or bid the tortur'd wretch
Nor feel his anguish ? 'tis impossible.
Could reason govern, I should now rejoice
They were engag'd, and count the tedious moments

Till.

'Till conquest smil'd, and Rome again was free.
 Could reason govern, I should beg of heaven
 To guide my brother's sword, and plunge it deep
 Ev'n in the bosom of the man I love.
 I should forget he ever won my soul;
 Forget 'twas your command that bade me love him;
 Nay fly perhaps to yon detested field,
 And spurn with scorn his mangled body from me.

Hor. Why wilt thou talk thus? Præthee be more calm:

I can forgive thy tears, they flow from nature,
 And could have gladly wish'd the Alban state
 Had found us other enemies to vanquish.
 But heaven has will'd it, and heaven's will be done!—
 The glorious expectation of success
 Buys up my soul, nor lets a thought intrude
 To dash my promis'd joys.—What steady valour
 Beamed from their eyes! Just so, if fancy's power
 May form conjecture from his after-age,
 Rome's founder must have look'd, when warm in youth,
 And flush'd with future conquest, forth he march'd
 Against proud Acron, with whose bleeding spoils
 He grac'd the altar of Feretrian Jove.
 —Methinks I feel recovered; I might venture
 Forth to the field again. What, ho! Volscinius,
 Attend me to the camp.

Horatia. My dearest father,
 Let me intreat your stay; the tumult there
 Will discompose you, and a quick relapse
 May prove most dangerous. I'll restrain my tears,
 If they offend you.

Hor. Well, I'll be advis'd.
 'Twere now too late, ere this they must have conquer'd;
 —And here's the happy messenger of glory.

Enter Valeria.

Valeria. All's lost, all's ruin'd, freedom is no more!

Hor. What dost thou say?

Valeria. That Rome's subdu'd by Alba.

Hor. It cannot be: where are my sons? all dead?

Valeria. Publius is still alive, the other two

Have paid the fatal debt they ow'd their country.

Hor. Publius alive ? you must mistake, Valeria ;
He knows his duty better.

He must be dead, or Rome victorious.

Valeria. Thousands as well as I beheld the combat ;
After his brother's death he stood alone,
And acted wonders against three assailants ;
'Till forc'd at last to save himself by flight.

Hor. By flight ? and did the soldiers let him pass ?
O I am ill again !—the coward villain !

[Throwing himself into his chair,

Horatia. Alas, my brothers !

Hor. Weep not for them, girl ;

They've died a death which kings themselves might
envy,

And whilst they liv'd they saw their country free.

O had I perish'd with them ! But for him

Whose impious flight dishonours all his race,

Tears a fond father's heart, and tamely barter

For poor precarious life his country's glory,

Weep, weep for him, and let me join my tears !

Valeria. What could he do, my lord, when three op-
pos'd him ?

Hor. He might have died !—O villain, villain, vil-
lain !

—And he shall die ; this arm shall sacrifice

The life he dar'd preserve with infamy.

[Endeavouring to rise]

What means this weakness ? 'tis untimely now,

When I should punish an ungrateful boy.

Was this his boasted virtue which could charm

His cheated sovereign, and brought tears of joy

To my old eyes ?—so young a hypocrite !

O shame, shame, shame !

Valeria. Have patience, Sir ; all Rome

Beheld his valour, and approv'd his flight,

Against such opposition,

Hor. Tell not me,

What's Rome to me ? Rome may excuse her traitor ;

But I'm the guardian of my house's honour,

And I will punish. Pray ye lead me forth,

I would

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I would have air. But grant me strength, kind gods,
To do this act of justice, and I'll own,
Whate'er 'gainst Rome your awful will decree,
Ye still are just, and merciful to me! [Exit.]

A C T IV.

SCENE, a Room in Horatius's House.

Enter Horatius, Valeria following.

HORATIUS.

AWAY. away. — I feel my strength renew'd,
And I will hunt the villain through the world;
No deserts shall conceal, nor darkness hide him.
He is well skill'd in flight, but he shall find
'Tis not so easy to elude the vengeance
Of a wrong'd father's arm, as to escape
His adversary's sword.

Valeria. Restrain your rage
But for a moment, Sir; when you shall hear
The whole unravel'd, you will find he's innocent.

Hor. It cannot be.

Valeria. And see, my brother comes,
He may perhaps relate——

Hor. I will not hear him;
I will not listen to my shame again.

Enter Valerius.

Val. I come with kind condolance from the king
To sooth a father's grief, and to express——

Hor. I've heard it all; I pray you spare my blushes;
I want not consolation, 'tis enough
They perish'd for their country. But the third——

Val. True, he indeed may well supply their loss,
And calls for all your fondness.

Hor. All my vengeance;
And he shall have it, Sir.

Val. Vengeance, my lord? What fault has he committed?

Hor. Why will you double my confusion thus?
Is flight no fault?

Val.

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Val. In such a cause as his
'Twas glorious.

Hor. Glorious! O rare sophistry,
To find a way through infamy to glory!

Val. I scarce can trust my senses!—Infamy!
What, was it infamous to save his country?
Is art a crime? Is it the name of flight
We can't forgive, though its ador'd effect
Restor'd us all to freedom, fame, and empire.

Hor. What fame, what freedom, who has sav'd his
country?

Val. Your son, my lord, has done it.

Hor. How, when, where?

Val. Is't possible? Did you not say you knew!

Hor. I care not what I knew; O tell me all,
Is Rome still free?—has Alba? has my son?—
Tell me.

Val. Your son, my lord, has slain her champions!

Hor. What Publius?

Val. Ay, Publius.

Hor. O let me clasp thee to me—
Were there not three remaining?

Val. True, there were?
But wounded all.

Hor. Your sister here had told us
That Rome was vanquish'd, that my son was fled—

Val. And he did fly, but 'twas that flight preserv'd us.
All Rome as well as she has been deceiv'd.

Hor. Let me again embrace thee.—Come, relate it.
Did I not say, Valeria, that my boy
Must needs be dead, or Rome victorious?
I long to hear the manner.—Well, Valerius.

Val. Your other sons, my lord, had paid the debt
They ow'd to Rome, and he alone remain'd
'Gainst three opponents, whose united strength,
Tho' wounded each, and robb'd of half their force,
Was still too great for his. Awhile he stood
The fierce assaults, and then pretended flight
Only to tire his wounded adversaries.

Hor. Pretended flight, and this succeeded, ha!
O glorious boy!

Val.

Val. 'Twas better still, my lord;
For all pursued, but not with equal speed.
Each eager for the conquest press'd to reach him,
Nor did the first till 'twas too late perceive
His fainter brothers panting far behind.

Hor. He took them singly then? an easy conquest,
'Twas boys play only.

Val. Never did I see
Such universal joy, as when the last
Sunk on the ground beneath Horatius' sword;
Who seem'd awhile to parley as a friend,
And would have given him life, but Caius scorn'd it.

Valeria. Caius! O poor Horatia!

Hor. Peace, I charge thee.
Go, dress thy face in smiles; and bid thy friend;
Wake to new transports; let ambition fire her
What is a lover lost! Kings will seek
For her alliance now, and mightiest chiefs
Be honour'd by her smiles. Will they not, youth?

[Exit Valeria.]

Val. Most sure, my lord, this day has added worth
To her, whose merit was before unequalled.

Hor. How could I doubt his virtue!—Mighty gods,
This is true glory to preserve his country,
And bid by one brave act th' Horatian name
In fame's eternal volumes be enroll'd.
Methinks already I behold his triumph,
Rome gazes on him like a second founder.
Ere long, perhaps, they will raise altars to him,
And even with hymns and sacrifice adore
The virtue I suspected!—Gracious heav'n!
Where is he? Let me fly, and at his feet
Forget the father, and implore a pardon
For such injustice.

Val. The king ere this
Has from the field dispatch'd him; he but stay'd
Till he could send him home with some slight honours
Of scatter'd wreaths, and grateful songs of praise;
For till to-morrow he postpones the pomp
Of solemn thanks, and sacrifice to heaven
For liberty restor'd. But hark! that shout

Which

Which sounds from far, and seems the mingled voice
Of thousands, speaks him onward on his way.

Hor. How my heart dances!—Yet I blush to meet
him.

But I will on. Come, come, Horatia, leave [Calling
Thy sorrow far behind, and let us fly *the door.*
With open arms to greet our common glory.

Exit Horatius.

Enter Horatia and Valeria, to Valerius.

Horatia. Yes, I will go; this father's hard command
Shall be obey'd, and I will meet the conquerer;
But not in smiles.

Val. O go not, gentle lady;
Might I advise—

Valeria. Your griefs are yet too fresh,
And may offend him; do not, my Horatia.

Val. Indeed 'twere better to avoid his presence,
It will revive your sorrows, and recall—

Horatia. Sir, when I saw you last I was a woman,
The fool of nature, a fond prey to grief,
Made up of sighs and tears. But now, my soul
Disdains the very thought of what I was;
Observe me well; am I not nobly chang'd?
Flow my sad eyes, or heaves my breast one groan?
No, for I doubt no longer. 'Tis not grief,
'Tis resolution now, and fix'd despair.

Valeria. My dear Horatia, you strike terrors through
me:
What dreadful purpose hast thou form'd? O speak!

Val. Talk gently to her.—Hear me yet, sweet
lady,

You must not go; whatever you resolve,
There is a sight will pierce you to the soul.

Horatia. What sight?

Val. Alas, I should be glad to hide it;
But it is—

Horatia. What?

Val. Your brother wears in triumph
The very scarf I bore to Curatius.

Horatia.

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Horatia. [Wildly.] Ye Gods, I thank ye! 'tis with joy I hear it.

If I should falter now, that fight would rouse
My drooping rage, and swell the tempest louder.

—But soft; they may prevent me; my wild passion
Betrays my purpose. —I'll dissemble with them.

[*She sits down.*]

Val. She softens now.

Valeria. How do you, my Horatia?

Horatia. Alas, my friend, 'tis madness which I utter
Since you persuade me then, I will not go.
But leave me to myself; I would sit here;
Alone in silent sadness pour my tears,
And meditate on my unheard-of woes,

Val. [To Valeria.] 'Twere well to humour this. But
may she, not.
If left alone, do outrage on herself?

Valeria. I have prevented that; she has not near her
One instrument of death.

Val. Retire we then,
But oh not far, for now I feel my soul
Still more perplex'd with love. Who knows, Valeria,
But, when this storm of grief has blown its fill,
She may grow calm, and listen to my vows.

[*Exeunt Valerius and Valeria.*]

After a short silence Horatia rises and comes forward.

Horatia. Yes, they are gone; and now be firm my
soul!

This way I can elude their search. The heart,
Which doats like mine, must break to be at ease.
Just now I thought, had Curiatius liv'd,
I could have driven him from my breast for ever.
But death has cancell'd all my wrongs at once.

—They were not wrongs; 'twas virtue which undid us,
And virtue shall unite us in the grave.

I heard them say, as they departed hence,
That they had robb'd me of all means of death.
Vain thought! they knew not half Horatia's purpose.

Be resolute, my brother; let no weak
Unmanly fondness mingle with thy virtue,
And I will touch thee nearly. —Come on,

'Tis

'Tis thou alone canst give Horatia peace. [Exit.

SCENE, *A street of Rome.*

Chorus of youths and virgins singing and scattering branches of oak, flowers, &c. Then enters Horatius leaning on the arm of Publius Horatius.

CHORUS.] Thus, for freedom nobly won,
Rome her hasty tribute pours ;
And on one victorious son
Half exhausts her blooming stores.

A YOUTH.] Scatter here the laurel crown,
Emblem of immortal praise !
Wond'rous youth ! to thy renown
Future times shall altars raise.

A VIRGIN.] Scatter here the myrtle wreath,
Tho' the bloodless victor's due ;
Grateful thousands sav'd from death
Shall devote that wreath to you.

A YOUTH.] Scatter here the oaken bough ;
Ev'd for one averted fate
We that civic meed bestow—
He sav'd all who sav'd the state.

Hor. Thou dost forgive me then, my dearest boy.
I cannot tell thee half my ecstasy.
The day which gave thee first to my glad hopes
Was misery to this—I'm mad with transport !
Why are ye silent there ? again renew
Your songs of praise, and in a louder strain
Pour forth your joy, and tell the list'ning spheres
That Rome is freed by my Horatius' hand.

Pub. No more, my friends.—You must permit
me, Sir,

To contradict you here. Not but my soul,
Like yours, is open to the charms of praise :
There is no joy beyond it, when the mind
Of him who hears it can with honest pride
Confess it just, and listen to its music.
But now the toils I have sustain'd require
Their interval of rest, and every sense

Is deaf to pleasure.—Let me leave you friends ;
We're near our home, and would be private now :
To-morrow we'll expect your kind attendance
To share our joys, and waft our thanks to heaven.

[As they are going off Horatia rushes in.]

Horatia. Where is the mighty chief ?

Hor. My daughter's voice !

I bade her come ; she has forgot her sorrows,
And is again my child.

Horatia. Is this the hero
That tramples nature's ties, and nobly soars
Above the dictates of humanity ?
Let me observe him well.

Pub. What means my sister ?

Horatia. Thy sister ! I disclaim the impeous title
Base and inhuman ! Give me back my husband,
My life, my soul, my murder'd Curiatius !

Pub. He perish'd for his country.

Horatia. Gracious gods,
Was't not enough that thou had'st murder'd him,
But thou must triumph in thy guilt, and wear
His bleeding spoils ?—O let me tear them from thee,
Drink the dear drops that issu'd from his wounds,
More dear to me than the whole tide that swells
With impious pride a hostile brother's heart.

Hor. Am I awake, or is it all illusion !
Was it for this thou cam'st ?

Pub. Horatia, hear me,
Yet I am calm, and can forgive thy folly :
Would I could call it by no harsher name.
But do not tempt me farther. —Go, my sister,
Go hide thee from the world, nor let a Roman
Know with what insolence thou dar'st avow
Thy infamy, or what is more, my shame
How tamely I forgave it.—Go, Horatia. *[then ?]*

Horatia. I will not go.—What have I touch'd thee
And canst thou feel ?—O think not thou shalt lose
Thy share of anguish. I'll pursue thee still,
I'll be the fury that shall haunt thy dreams ;
Wake thee with shrieks, and place before thy sight

E

Thy

36 THE ROMAN FATHER.

Thy mangled friends in all their pomp of horror.

Pub. Away with her ; 'tis womanish complaining.
Think'st thou such trifles can alarm the man
Whose noblest passion is his country's love ?
—Let it be thine, and learn to bear affliction.

Horatia. Curse on my country's love, the trick ye
teach us

To make us slaves beneath the mask of virtue ;
To rob us of each soft endearing sense,
And violate the first great law within us.
I scorn the impious passion.

Pub. Have a care ;
Thou'lt touch'd a string which may awake my ven-
geance.

Horatia. [*Aside.*] Then it shall do it.

Pub. O, if thou dar'st prophane
That sacrid tie which winds about my heart,
By heaven I swear, by the great gods who rule
The fate of empires, 'tis not this fond weakness
Which hangs upon me, and retards my justice,
Nor even thy sex, which shall protect thee from me.
[*Clapping his hand upon his sword.*]

Hor. Drag her away—thou'lt make me curse thee
girl—

Indeed she's mad [To Publius.]

Horatia. Stand off, I am not mad—
Nay, draw thy sword ; I do defy the murderer,
Barbarian, Roman! — Mad! the name of Rome
kes madmen of you all ; my curses on it.

Rise, rise ye states, (O that my voice could fire
Your tardy wrath !) confound its selfish greatness,
Raze its proud walls, and lay its towers in ashes !

Pub. I'll bear no more— [Drawing his sword.]

Hor. Distraction !—force her off—

Horatia. [*Struggling.*] Could I but prove the Helen to
destroy

This curs'd unsocial state, I'd die with transport :
Gaze on the spreading fires—'till the last pile
Sunk in the blaze—then mingle with its ruins.

Pub. Thou shalt not live to that.

Hor.

Hor. Assist me friends—

Drag—tear her off—O Publius—O my son—

Spare, spare a father! [*They force her off.*]

Pub. [*After a pause.*] My whole soul's mov'd,
And Rome's immortal genius stirs within me!
Yes, ye dread powers, whose everlasting fires
Blaze on our altars, and whose sacred shields
From heaven descending guard imperial Rome,
I feel, I feel your wrongs.—For you I fought,
For you I bear the sword.—Lead on, my friends. [*Exit.*]

Hor. [*Looking at him as he goes out.*] How dreadful,
yet how lovely is his virtue! [*Going after him.*]

Enter Valerius, and two or three servants.

Val. [*Stopping Horatius.*] Saw you your daughter,
Sir?

Hor. Alas, Valerius,
I yet stand trembling on the brink of fate,
And scarce can think the dreadful moment past.
She has been here, and with such impious outrage
Assail'd her brother, that our utmost force
Scarce sav'd her from his sword.

Val. But she is safe?

Hor. Yes, from the sword she is;
But mad as the Cumæan maid she raves,
And pours incessant curses on her country.
Misguided girl!

I must not see her now; Publius will think
That I neglect him; every pang I feel
Affronts his virtue, and each idle doubt
Is treason to the state his arm has sav'd.
O my divided heart!

[*Exit.*]

Val. Publius will think!
Then 'tis in Rome, it seems, become a crime
Ev'n for the foster sex to let their anguish
Transport their souls beyond the bounds of reason.
Our heroes would new-mould humanity;
And tie down madness to the pedant rules
Of dull discretion.—Dar'd attempt her life!
Let me not think on that. I will avoid him,

'Till I am calm again. Go some of you
 This way, some that, and search my sister out.
 Say if I meet her not, I shall return
 And wait her here.—This violence of grief
 Cannot last long; and such a heart as hers,
 So form'd for passion, so accessible
 To tender pains, may learn once more to prove
 The pleasing transports of reviving love. [Exeunt.]

A C T V.

S C E N E, *the Street.*

Enter Valeria and a Servant.

VALERIA. [In disorder.]

REgard not me—Did you not say, my brother
 Was here? Where is he? Yet I know not why
 I wish him here, but that my burbling heart
 May vent its griefs, and find a refuge for them.
Serv. Madam, my lord approaches.

Enter Valerius.

Valeria. O Valerius,
 Horatia, poor Horatia's lost for ever;
 Her unrelenting brother—

Val. Dearest sister,
 Compose your fears. She has escap'd his rage,
 But now I saw her father, and his care
 Has sav'd her from the blow, and begs your aid
 To sooth her tortur'd mind.

Valeria. What says my brother?
 How sav'd! alas, too sure she dies this moment.
 She had no father there! these eyes beheld
 The fatal stroke, and these sad arms receiv'd her.
 Nor had I left her now but to obey
 Her own command, and by intreaties force
 Her cruel brother to her.

Val. [With amazement.] When was this?
 Where was it?—Say, Valeria—

Valeria. When I left you

THE ROMAN FATHER.

To seek some diff'rent way our hapless charge,
 Led by the noise from street to street I ran,
 And came at last where through the gather'd crowd
 I saw but could not reach her. Wild she seem'd
 Struggling with all that would oppose her passage,
 And trying every method to provoke
 Her brother's fury. With dire blasphemies,
 Which shock'd my trembling soul, her tongue profan'd:
 Each awful name, and not a god escap'd
 Her imprecating rage.

Val. Well, well, enough;
 But come to him.

Valeria. Silent a while he stood,
 As the dead calm before the thunder rolls,
 Nor answer'd to her rage: then, rous'd at once,
 As if some inspiration touch'd his soul,
 His bosom heav'd, he rais'd his eyes to heav'n,
 Then burst in tears, and whilst he wept he drove
 The poniard to her heart, and thus he cried,
 Thus perish all the enemies of Rome!

Val. Thou seem'st to plead his cause.

Valeria. Alas, my brother,
 I speak but what I saw.

Val. Where was her father?

Valeria. I know not, but some chance they say, detain'd him;

He scarce had left the crowd, and thought her safe.

Val. Scarce left the crowd, and thought her safe?—

O gods,

'Twas I, 'twas I detain'd him; in that moment
 The horrid deed was done.—Where are they now?

Valeria. I hope with her. She fear'd some fatal violence,

And therefore begg'd me to intreat them to her.

Val. And have you seen them? Are they friends?

Valeria. O no,
 I found them high in wrath: The poor old man
 Torn with contending passions threaten'd oft
 Destruction on his son, who with disdain
 Laid bare his breast, and bade him strike the blow.

The patriot then took place, and he would wish
 He never had a daughter. My approach
 Alarm'd them both ; but Publius soon resum'd
 His wonted firmness, bade her father go
 And mingle tears with hers, he would not see her,
 Nor dar'd pollute his conquest with her presence.
 Hast thou no heart, the father cried, and look'd
 Unutterable sorrow ; at which sight
 He yielded, and obeyed. I left them then
 To seek you out.—My brother, you regard not
 What I have said.—You hear me not.

Val. Valeria,

Revenge is busy here. Yes, thou proud chief,
 In spite of all the glories which surround thee,
 I yet may crush thy pride !

Valeria. You will not kill him ?

Val. Kill him, Valeria ;—'Tis no common death
 Which he shall die : I will have noble vengeance.
 The thought delights my soul ! [Going.]

Valeria. What thought, my brother ?

Nay tell me, or you go not.—Stay at least
 'Till you hear more.—I feel Horatia's wrongs
 As strong as you.—— [Exit Valerius.]

He's gone. Tho' my heart bleeds
 For my poor dying friend. I must pursue him.
 His fatal rashness may distress her more,
 And bring fresh sorrows on an aged Sire.
 Oppress'd too much already. [Exit.]

SCENE, a Room in Horatius's House.

Horatia on a Couch, and Attendants.

Horatia. Cease, cease your cruel aid, ye shall not save
 me.

My utmost wish is death, and I will have it.

Enter Horatius and Publius.

Yet let me thank you for this little life
 Your art prolongs, 'till I have made my peace,
 And ask'd forgiveness here.

Hor. My child, my child !

Horatia.

Horatia. What means this tenderness?—I thought
to see you

Inflam'd with rage against a worthless wretch,
Who has dishonour'd your illustrious race,
And stain'd its brightest fame. In pity look not
Thus kindly on me.
For I have injur'd you.

Hor. Thou hast not, girl;
I said 'twas madness; but he would not hear me.

Horatia. O wrong him not, his act was noble justice.
I forc'd him to the deed:
I was resolv'd on death, and witness heaven,
I'd not have died by any hand but his
For the whole round of fame his worth shall boast
Thro' future ages. Nothing but this, my father,
Could reconcile us! I forgive him now
The death of Curiatius; this last blow
Has cancell'd that, and he's once more my brother.

Hor. What hast thou said? Wer't thou so bent on
death?

Was all thy rage dissembled?

Horatia. All, my father,
All but my love was false: what that inspir'd
I utter'd freely,
But for the rest, the curses which I pour'd
On heav'n defended Rome, were merely lures
To tempt his rage, and perfect my destruction.

Hor. O foolish nature, how it struggles here
Against the force of reason!—Save me, boy,
From the dire conflict: when I look this way,
[To his son.

'Tis reason's triumph; justice sanctifies
Paternal love, and glory crowns the whole.
But when I turn to her, I feel my strength
Again relapse, and scarce can bless the hand
Which sav'd my country.

Horatia. Then there's nought remains,
But thus to let out life open again:
These bleeding wounds rid you of the clog.

[Tearing off her bandages.
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[*Going.*]

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But thus to let out life open again:
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[Tearing off her bandages.
Which,

Which keeps affection from its proper sphere,
And shackles coward virtue.—But forgive me!

Pub. My sister, stay; I charge thee live, Horatia.
O thou hast planted daggers here!

Horatia. My brother!
Can you forgive me, too? then I am happy.

Enter Valeria. [*In a fright.*]

Valeria. O Sir, O my Horatia—yet thou livest,
And may'st recover all.

Hor. What mean you, lady?

Valeria. All Rome, my lord, has ta'en the alarm and
crowds

Of citizens enrag'd are posting hither
To call for justice on Horatius' head.

Horatia. O heavens! why numbers of them
Beheld his provocation.

Valeria. True, they did;
But my unhappy brother——

Hor. What of him?
Does he arraign my son?

Valeria. He leads the crowd;
And, as he pleases, sways their giddy minds;
—But she shall live, and all be well again.

[*Turning tenderly towards Horatia.*]

Horatia. O no, it cannot be—O Sir,—O brother!
Can ye behold me now, and not recall
Your kind forgiveness?—can ye?—will ye?—speak!
—But do not curse me, Sir!

Pub. My sister stay, and you, my father, hear me.
I'll end this strife, and die since they require it.
Heaven knows how willingly!

But let not ignominy stain my wreaths,
Let me not fall a public spectacle,
Dragg'd like a criminal to justice. No,
My father, save me from that dreadful scene,
Assume that generous right the laws allow you,
And take this forfeit life with honour from me,

[*Offering him his sword.*]
Hor.

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Hor. True, and it shall be so. Yes, yes, my children,
We'll die together.

Horatia. (*Rising from the couch.*) Oh forbear, forbear!
In pity to yourselves, to the dear honour
Of your unspotted names!—O blind old man,
Dar'st thou lift up thy sacrilegious hand
Against the chief, the god that sav'd thy country?

[*A noise without.*]

Alas they're here—

Horatia. Would I could live!—it will not be—

Hor. My daughter!

Horatia. Regard not me—There, there employ thy
power.

'Tis my last prayer—Valeria, I adjure thee
By the just gods, proclaim him innocent—
They'll think my father partial—O remember,
Remember, dear Valeria—brother—father! [*Dies.*]

Pub. Then fate has done its worst.

Where are these citizens? [*Noise without.*]

Enter Tullus, Valerius, and Citizens.

Val. See! fellow citizens, see where she lies
The bleeding victim—

Tul. Stop, unmanner'd youth!

Think'st thou we know not wherefore we are here?
Seest thou yon drooping Sire?

Hor. [*Turning hastily towards them.*] Permit them
Sir.

What would ye, Romans?

Kal. We are come, dread Sir,
In the behalf of murdered innocence,
Murdered by him, the man—

Hor. Whose conquering arm
Has sav'd you all from ruin. O shame, shame!
Has Rome no gratitude? Do ye not blush
To think whom your insatiate rage pursues?
Down, down, and worship him.

1st Citizen. Does he plead for him?

2d Citizen. Does he forgive his daughter's death?

Hor. He does.

And glories in it, glories in the thought

That

That there's one Roman left who dares be grateful.
 If you are wrong'd then what am I? Must I
 Be taught my duty by th' effected tears
 Of strangers to my blood? Had I been wrong'd,
 I know a father's right, and had not ask'd
 This ready talking Sir to bellow for me,
 And mouth my wrongs in Rome.

Val. Citizens,

Friends, countrymen, regard not what he says.
 Stop, stop your ears, nor hear a frantic father
 Thus plead against his child.

Hor. He does belie me:

What child have I?—Alas, I have but one,
 And him ye would tear from me.

All Citizens. Hear him, hear him!

*Pub. No, let me speak. Think'st thou, ungenerous
 youth,*

To hurt my quiet?—I am hurt beyond
 Thy power to harm me. Death's extremest tortures
 Were happiness to what I feel.——Yet know
 My injur'd honour bids me live, nay more,
 It bids me even descend to plead for life.

——But wherefore waste I words? 'Tis not to him,
 But you, my countrymen, to you I speak;
 He lov'd the maid.

Citizens. How, lov'd her!

*Pub. Fondly loved her,
 And under show of public justice screens
 A private passion, and a mean revenge.*

[*Valerius seems confounded, and goes to his sister.*
 Think ye I lov'd her not! high heav'n's my witness
 How tenderly I lov'd her, and the pangs
 I feel this moment, could you see my heart,
 Would prove too plainly I am still her brother.
 You are all Romans, and what you decree,
 However hard, is just.

*1st Citizen. He shall be saved.
 Valerius has misled us.*

All. Save him, save him!

Hor. I thank you, friends.

Val.

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Val. What mean ye, would ye save
A murderer from death? I'll not be held. [*To his sister.*
It was no crime to love her, I will speak,
—If justice moves you not, yet dread th' event.
Fear ye not heav'n and the avenging gods
Who gave him up to shame, and urg'd him on
To stain his conquests with a sister's blood?

Pub. Away, away? am I the first whose arm
Was stained with kindred blood? and dar'st thou talk
In Rome thus idly? What's our founder then,
If I'm a murderer? Heaven approv'd the death
Of Remus, as deliberate as this. —

Tullus. Enough, enough!
With reverence speak we of those mighty names
Which stand enroll'd above. All acts of blood
Must not be deem'd as murders. 'Tis the intent,
And not the action, constitutes the crime.

1st Citizen. We did declare him free, but this *Vale-*
rius

Would interrupt our will.

Tul. If yet a doubt remains,
Behold that virtuous father, who could boast
This very morn a numerous progeny,
The dear supports of his declining age;
Then read the sad reverse with pitying eyes,
And tell your conscious hearts they fell for you.

Hor. I'm over-paid by that, nor claim I ought
On their accounts; for by high heaven I swear
I'd rather see him added to the heap
Than Rome enslav'd.

Tul. Then I pronounce him free. And now *Hora-*
tius
The evening of thy stormy day at last
Shall close in peace. Here, take him to thy breast.

Pub. Sir, father, friends.—What have you given me
Life, and unblemish'd honour,—for the last
My soul shall bless you ever.—But what power,
O what kind God shall to this tortur'd breast
Restore its wonted calm?—Dear bleeding clay!

Hor. My son, my conqueror!—'Twas a fatal stroke,
But

THE ROMAN FATHER.

But shall not wound our peace. This kind embrace
 Shall spread a sweet oblivion o'er our sorrows.
 Or if in after-times, tho' 'tis not long
 That I shall trouble you, some sad remembrance
 Should steal a sigh, and peevish age forget
 Its resolution, only boldly say
 Tho' saved't the state, and I'll intreat forgiveness.

Tul. Learn hence, ye Romans, on how sure a base,
 The patriot builds his happiness; no stroke,
 No keenest, deadliest, shaft of adverse fate
 Can make his generous bosom quite despair,
 But that alone by which his country falls.
 Grief may to grief in endless round succeed,
 And Nature suffer when our children bleed:
 Yet still superior must that hero prove,
 Whose first, best passion is his COUNTRY'S LOVE.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]



F I N I S.

